

CLAIMS IN APPLN. NO. 10/014,480 AS AMENDED 12/19/2003

1. (Currently amended) A method for deaerating liquid ~~, especially water,~~ that contains air, oxygen, nitrogen, or other gas dissolved therein, by

(a) providing a stream of said liquid flowing at a first velocity and at a first pressure in a line having a first cross-sectional area,

(b) flowing said stream into and through a pressure reduction region in said line having a second cross-sectional area less than said first cross-sectional area, whereupon in said region the velocity of said stream increases, the pressure of said stream decreases, and gas dissolved in said stream evolves from said stream, and

(c) recovering said evolved gas separately from said liquid before it redissolves into said liquid [.]

wherein after said evolved gas is recovered from said liquid, said liquid is recycled to said line upstream of said region.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1 further comprising injecting stripping gas into the stream upstream of said pressure reduction region, and removing said stripping gas from said stream downstream of said pressure reduction region.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 2 wherein said the stripping gas is air, nitrogen or carbon dioxide.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 1 wherein step (c) comprises feeding said stream into a separatory vessel wherein said evolved gas and said liquid separate from each other, and said evolved gas is vented out of said vessel.

5-7. (Canceled)